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For the President of the European Patent Office

Le Président de l'Office européen des brevets
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Particulate creamer comprising phytosterols and food compositions comprising said creamer

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PARTICULATE CREAMER COMPRISING PHYTOSTEROLS AND FOOD COMPOSITIONS COMPRISING SAID CREAMER

Field of the invention

5 The present invention relates to particulate compositions suitable for use as creamer and/or whitener, and in particular such compositions comprising phytosterols (incl. derivatives of such sterols as defined herein, such as e.g. ester derivatives). The invention further relates to a process for manufacturing such compositions and food products containing such creamer and/or whitener.

Background of the invention

10 Food compositions (and in particular savoury food compositions) contain in many cases fat. This is especially the case for particulate and/or pasty compositions like preparations for instant cream-style soups and sauces, which to a large extent consist of fat, starch or a
15 starchy matter, and salt and flavourings. Particulate in this context is to be understood as powder, flakes, cubes, pellets etcetera (i.e. non fluid).

(Mixtures for) cream-style soups and sauces as above referred, but also other products such as instant dishes like pasta with a sauce or wet soups and sauces often contain an ingredient
20 which is referred to as a creamer, and/or creamer/whitener, and/or creamer/thickener. These products usually contain fat blends that can provide a creamy taste and/or mouthfeel and/or improved body and/or viscosity and/or a whitening effect. Such products (herein after called creamers for brevity) can also be in the form of e.g. tablets. To be suitable in these applications the fat blends must have the appropriate physical properties in terms of melting
25 behaviour, crystallisation behaviour, brittleness, organoleptic properties, taste, as well as physical and chemical stability. In order to increase stability, shelf life and solubility, and to give proper creaming or whitening behaviour the fat blends are commonly encapsulated or (partly) coated with or dispersed in another material, e.g. hydrophilic film forming materials. In such encapsulates, dispersions or partly coated fats, the individual fat blend particles as well
30 as clusters of fat blend particles are at least partially covered and/or surrounded by and/or dispersed in the encapsulation or matrix material. The fat blends should therefore also be suitable for being submitted to encapsulation and drying processes in order to form free flowing and highly dispersible products. The covering, encapsulation or matrix material often contributes to the properties of the creamer.

The fats in savoury compositions described above usually comprise a considerable amount triglycerides of fatty acids (hereinafter for short: triglycerides). Fats are usually mixtures of various triglycerides. The type of fat or fat blend used for a given purpose is determined (next to availability and price) by e.g. the properties the fat has and how it performs in a given product, and in the manufacture of such product. The fat should perform well on e.g. taste, melting in the mouth, taste keepability, but also on ability to be processed into a suitable product as well as performance in the packed product, e.g. keepability (in particular fat staining for cubes packaged in cardboard).

- 10 The triglycerides (which form part or all of the fat) are usually obtained from vegetable sources and may have been subjected to various treatments, such as fractionation (dry or wet), purification, hardening, interesterification, blending etcetera, to give the fat the desired product properties. Hardening unsaturated fat or triglycerides to saturated or partially unsaturated fat or triglycerides is in particular a tool used to obtain the desired melting behaviour. In this way, oils or soft fats can be turned into fats showing more suitable properties for solid or dry formulations.

- 20 The hardening process (in particular partial hardening) may lead to formation of a certain amount of so-called trans-unsaturated fatty acids (and/or triglycerides containing such trans-unsaturated fatty acids as acyl moiety), in short TFA's. For various reasons it may be desired to reduce or eliminate the amount of trans-unsaturated fatty acids (and triglycerides thereof) in products. For spreads (margarines and the like) a wide range of possible alternative fats and triglycerides are proposed, as is disclosed in e.g. WO 97/16978 and WO 96/39855.

- 25 The triglycerides mentioned in such applications frequently contain lauric acid (C12 saturated fatty acid). It has been found that when one wishes to find an alternative for the trans-unsaturated fatty acids (and fats containing them) in savoury-type food applications (in which the creamers are often used) lauric acid (and its triglycerides) is undesired. Lauric acid and triglycerides containing lauric acid may show a range of desirable properties, in particular melting behaviour, but in a savoury food application triglycerides of lauric acid were found to lead to a (soapy) off-flavour, especially after prolonged storage.

- 35 Hence, there is a desire for creamer, and/or creamer/whitener, and/or creamer/thickener, and also (savory) food compositions such as (mixtures for) cream-style soups and sauces, (instant) food compositions, meal makers and others that contain such creamer, or

creamer/whitener, and/or creamer/thickener, wherein the creamer, and/or creamer/whitener, and/or creamer/thickener, which contain fatty matter (i.e. matter preferably having similar taste and/or mouthfeel and/or cooking behaviour as the conventionally used triglycerides) which is low in trans-unsaturated fatty acids (e.g. below 5% of the total fats present, preferably less than 2%, more preferably less than 1%). Still such creamer, and/or creamer/whitener, and/or creamer/thickener should be not too difficult to manufacture and process in comparison to the conventional products, and should still perform well in a (savory) food composition comprising carbohydrates, in particular concerning processability, fat staining, crystallisation, mouthfeel, taste and other characteristics as mentioned above.

Preferably, such product should also be low in lauric acid or triglycerides thereof (e.g. below 10% of the total fatty matter present, preferably less than 3%, most preferably less than 0.5% wt of the total fatty matter present). Also, the alternative fatty matter should combine well with the coating /encapsulation/matrix material. Suitable encapsulation or matrix material for the creamers etcetera according to the invention are edible proteins such as for example milk proteins, hydrolysed proteins, edible carbohydrates, such as for example starch or modified starches as well as sugars, sugar syrups or sugar derivatives, dextrines or maltodextrines etcetera. The creamers in the form of encapsulated or covered fatty matter usually contain 10-95%, or 20-90% wt of encapsulation material, based on the total creamer.

EP 1038444 discloses hard butter compositions for use in chocolate, wherein said hard butter component comprises 50-80% SUS triglycerides (S being C16 and C18 saturated fatty acids, U being C16 and C18 unsaturated acids) and is free from trans acids and lauric acids.

US 5,858,427 discloses compositions for use as coatings on ice creams, said compositions comprising 20-60% sugar, 20-70% fat, 0-30% protein. The fat is preferably low in trans unsaturated fatty acids and contains 25-80% SUS (S being saturated fatty acids of 16-24 carbon atoms, U being unsaturated acids of 18 or more carbon atoms), and the fat has a specified melting behaviour (N_0 of 40-80, N_{20} of 15-60, N_{25} of 2-20). The compositions can be made by mixing all ingredients.

EP 545463 discloses a fat blend for confectionery (chocolate) not needing tempering, which fat blend is low in trans fatty acids, and which blend comprises more than 50% SUS (S being saturated fatty acids of 16-24 carbon atoms, U being C18:1 and C18:2) and less than 30% S'OS' (S' being saturated fatty acids of 16-18 carbon atoms, O being C18:1).

US 5,939,114 discloses ice cream coating compositions with reduced waxiness and a low content of trans unsaturated fatty acids, wherein the fat composition contains less than 10% SSS, 25-80% SUS, 2-20% SSU, 8-60% SUU and USU, less than 10% UUU (S being saturated fatty acids of 16-24 carbon atoms, U being unsaturated acids of 18 or more carbon atoms). The coating composition may contain (next to 20-70% of said fat) the usual ingredients for such compositions: 25-60% sugar, and 0-30% cocoa powder, milk proteins, flavours and emulsifiers. The compositions can be made by mixing all ingredients.

10 **Summary of the invention**

It has now been found that the objectives as given above may be met (at least in part) by particulates comprising 10-95% wt (preferably 20-90%) of a matrix material and 5-90% wt (preferably 10-80% wt) of fatty matter, wherein said fatty matter comprises 5-100% of from one or more of phytosterols as defined below.

15

In the particulates according to the invention it may be preferred that the fatty matter is dispersed in the matrix material, preferably as discrete regions. More preferably, the fatty matter is dispersed in the matrix material as oily or fatty matter droplets, crystals or particles. As an alternative or more specific embodiment, the fatty matter is preferably present as oily or fatty matter droplets or crystals which droplets or crystals are at least partly covered by or encapsulated with the matrix material.

20

Phytosterols herein, also known as plant sterols or vegetable sterols can be classified in three groups, 4-desmethylsterols, 4-monomethylsterols and 4,4'-dimethylsterols. In oils they mainly exist as free sterols and sterol esters of fatty acids although sterol glucosides and acylated sterol glucosides are also present. There are three major phytosterols namely beta-sitosterol, stigmasterol and campesterol. Schematic drawings of the components meant are as given in "Influence of Processing on Sterols of Edible Vegetable Oils", S.P. Kochhar; Prog. Lipid Res. 22: pp. 161-188.

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The respective 5a- saturated derivatives such as sitostanol, campestanol and ergostanol and their derivatives are also encompassed in the term phytosterol.

Preferably the phytosterol is selected from the group comprising fatty acid ester of β -sitosterol, β -sitostanol, campesterol, campestanol, stigmasterol, brassicasterol, brassicastanol or a mixture thereof.

- 5 The phytosterols in this preferred embodiment are preferably esterified with a fatty acid. Preferably the sterols are esterified with one or more C2-22 fatty acids. For the purpose of the invention the term C2-22 fatty acid refers to any molecule comprising a C2-22 main chain and at least one acid group. Although not preferred within the present context the C2-22 main chain may be partially substituted or side chains may be present. Preferably, however the C2-
10 22 fatty acids are linear molecules comprising one or two acid group(s) as end group(s). Most preferred are linear C8-22 fatty acids as occur in natural oils.

- Suitable examples of any such fatty acids are acetic acid, propionic acid, butyric acid, caproic acid, caprylic acid, capric acid. Other suitable acids are for example citric acid, lactic acid,
15 oxalic acid and maleic acid. Most preferred are myristic acid, lauric acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, arachidic acid, behenic acid, oleic acid, cetoleic acid, erucic acid, elaidic acid, linoleic acid and linolenic acid.

- When desired a mixture of fatty acids may be used for esterification of the sterols. For
20 example, it is possible to use a naturally occurring fat or oil as a source of the fatty acid and to carry out the esterification via an interesterification reaction. Use of a natural source nearly always results in a mixture of fatty acids. In a particular embodiment, the fatty acid mixture contains a high amount (>50%, preferably >70%, further preferred >80%) of unsaturates, whether monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) and/or polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA). This
25 does not only provide the advantage of e.g. PUFA itself having good blood cholesterol lowering capacity, but also of the sterols esters prepared with such fatty acids and thus the creamer/whitener/thickener prepared with it. Preferably fatty acid mixtures of sunflower, safflower, rapeseed, linseed, olive oil, linola and/or soybean are used. These are typical sources of high PUFA and/or low SAFA. Suitable esterification conditions are for example
30 described in WO 92/19640.

Detailed description of the invention

- It is preferred that the matrix material comprises at least a protein or a carbohydrate, but preferably both a protein and a carbohydrate are both present in the matrix material (e.g. in a
35 ratio by weight protein : carbohydrate of between 1 : 0.2 and 1 : 20). Preferred proteins for the

purpose of the invention are dairy protein, hydrolysed protein, gelatin, soy protein, or mixtures thereof, with dairy proteins (e.g. whey protein or caseinate) being most preferred. Suitable carbohydrates in the present invention are maltodextrin, sugar, sugar derivative, starch, flour, chemically modified starch, physically modified starch, xanthan, guar, locust bean gum, alginate, pectin, carrageenan, polydextrose, or mixtures thereof. Also preferred as matrix material may be dairy products like liquid and/or powdered (skim) milk or cream.

In the present invention it is preferred that at least 60% by weight of the particulates (i.e. oily and fatty matter plus matrix material) has a size of 1-1000 μm , preferably 10-600 μm . It is also preferred that at least 60% by weight of the oily or fatty matter droplets, crystals or particles has a size of 0.05-100 μm , preferably 0.1-20 μm .

The particulates according to the invention are often "dry" preparations. However, such compositions still may contain a considerable amount of water, e.g. as a result of an incomplete dehydration process or as a result from water naturally present in the constituents, such as moisture in flour. The amount of moisture present in the compositions according to the invention is preferably below 30% wt (based on the total composition), more preferably less than 20% wt, most preferably less than 10%wt.

Hence, it is now possible to manufacture e.g. creamer and/or whitener type products which contain a large proportion of vegetable fats, wherein the fats contain less than 5%, preferably less than 2%, more preferably less than 1% wt of trans-unsaturated fatty acids (as triglycerides), and preferably having less than 10% wt (more preferably less than 3%, most preferably less than 0.5%) of triglycerides of lauric acid, and wherein the fats still have appropriate melting and crystallisation behaviour for manufacturing, storage and use. Thus, the invention further relates to a creamer and/or whitener-type product comprising 10-95% wt (preferably 20-90%) of a matrix material and 5-90% wt (preferably 10-80% wt) of fatty matter (preferably dispersed in the matrix material as discrete regions or as oily or fatty matter droplets, crystals or particles), which composition is substantially free from trans-unsaturated fatty acids or triglycerides thereof. Preferably, the compositions according to the invention are substantially free from animal fat. The invention also relates to creamers and/or whiteners comprising 10-100% of the particulates according to the invention.

The manufacturing process of the particulates according to the invention suitably involves preparing an emulsion or dispersion of the fatty matter and the matrix material (preferably

followed by a homogenising step) followed by drying said emulsion or dispersion. Said drying is preferably done by spray-drying but other drying processes such as for example heat drying (including vacuum freeze drying), air drying etc can also be employed. The emulsion or dispersion of the fatty matter and matrix material in an aqueous liquid can be prepared by means as known in the art, e.g. high shear mixing (optionally followed by homogenising), membrane emulsification techniques, or other means.

The invention further relates to the use of the particulates according to the invention as creamer and/or thickener and/or whitener. Such creamer and/or thickener can be in the form of a cube, pellet or tablet.

The invention also relates to (savory) food compositions comprising the particulates according to the invention. Hence, the invention further relates to a composition comprising 2-50% wt salt, 0-30% wt MSG, 0-50% fat and/or fatty matter, 0-20% wt herbs and/or spices, 0-30% wt vegetable particulates, 0-30% wt starch-based thickener and further comprising 0.1-65% wt (preferably 2-50% wt) of the particulates according to the invention. Such (savory) compositions can be in the form of flakes, granules, powder or agglomerated or pressed to a cube, pellet, or tablet, and can be intended e.g. as a soup- or sauce concentrate.

The (dry) particulates according to the invention can also be applied in liquid or pasty products (e.g. savory products) in which a creaming effect is desired. Such liquid or pasty products usually contain some water, and when the particulates according to the invention are incorporated in such liquid or pasty products the dry particulates will generally melt and/or dissolve, and no longer be visible as such. Examples of such liquid or pasty products are wet soups and sauces, which are often pasteurised, aseptically packaged, or sterilised products (as replacer for e.g. liquid cream). Hence, the present invention further relates to a process for preparing a liquid or pasty sauce, soup or concentrate of such a sauce or soup or concentrate, which process includes the step of including 0.1-65% wt (preferably 2-50% wt) of the particulates according to the invention as set out herein in such liquid or pasty sauce, soup or concentrate of such a sauce or soup or concentrate.

An additional benefit of the present invention is that it allows the inclusion of phytosterols as defined above in savory applications. Such sterols and stanols have health benefits, e.g. relating to blood cholesterol levels and/or balance. Additionally, it allows the manufacture and use of low calorie and low SAFA (saturated fatty acid) whiteners/creamers. The first is due to

the fact that (in case of fatty acid esters of phyto sterols and phytostanols) only the fatty acid tail contributes to the calories. As to the other mentioned advantage (low SAFA creamers/whiteners): conventional creamer/whitener particulates are prepared using hardened triglyceride fats, thus high SAFA fats. With low SAFA fats so far no proper
5 creamer/whitener could be manufactured. When using ester derivatives of phytosterols or phytostanols the ester can be prepared low in SAFA, and still the fatty matter so prepared can have suitable melting and other behaviour to be processed into a creamer and/or whitener, and can still have suitable properties upon use (inc. consumption). Yet a further benefit of the presently disclosed creamer and/or whitener is that the phytosterols as defined above are not
10 sensitive to lipase-enzyme activities which can be present in e.g. herbs or spices or other ingredients used in savoury applications. This may result in a better flavour upon storage.

The invention thus also relates to (savory) food compositions comprising the particulates as set out above, such as sauce and soup concentrates. Such (savory) food compositions
15 according to the invention can be any physical format, but the invention is most suitable for savory compositions that are in the form of pasty or particulate matter. Particulate matter is herein to be understood to comprise e.g. flakes, powder, cubes, pellets, tablets. In the case of cubes, pellets, tablets it may be needed to use a technique such as agglomerating or pressing the particulates according to the invention to obtain such shapes. The (savory) food
20 compositions as set out above usually contain additional material, such as 2-50% wt salt, 0-30% wt MSG, 0-50% fat and/or fatty matter, 0-20% wt herbs and/or spices, 0-30% wt vegetable particulates, 0-30% wt starch-based thickener and further comprising 0.1-30% wt of the particulates according to the invention. Examples of such (savory) food compositions are soup- and sauce concentrates (which yield a soup or sauce upon dilution and heating with an
25 aqueous liquid). The (savory) compositions above may be in the form of flakes, granules, powder or agglomerated or e.g. pressed to a cube, pellet, or tablet.

The savory food compositions as set out above may further comprise (e.g. in an amount of 0.1-50% wt) vegetable powder, e.g. tomato powder.
30

The particulates according to the invention may also be used in non-savory applications for performing a creaming effect. Additionally, the particulates may be used as a way to have phytosterols (as defined above) in formulations in which oxidation stability is a problem, as in the form of the particulates according to the invention they can be more stable against
35 oxidation.

The particulates can be used as such (in any physical shape), as part of a dry (as defined above) composition e.g. a soup or sauce concentrate, but the particulates may also be used in liquid or pasty formulations.

5

As mentioned, the fatty matter in the particulates according to the invention preferably comprises 5-100% (by weight on basis of the total fatty matter) of phytosterols (as defined above). Thus, the particulates according to the invention may comprise 0-95% of other fatty matter. Such other fatty matter can comprise e.g. triglycerides of fatty acids. Regarding such
10 triglycerides, it is preferred that the triglycerides are substantially free of trans-unsaturated fatty acids, e.g. triglycerides. It may be preferred that of such triglycerides at least 55% wt (preferably at least 65% wt, based on the triglycerides in the particulates according to the invention) are triglycerides of fully saturated C16 and longer chains (e.g. C16, C18, C20, C22 and C24) and/or triglycerides containing one cis-unsaturated fatty acid of any chain length and
15 two saturated fatty acids of 16 or more carbon atoms. In the particulates according to the invention it is preferred that the amount of H3 (triglyceride of 3 saturated fatty acids of 16 or more carbon atoms, e.g. C16-C24) is at least 15% wt based on the total amount of triglycerides in the particulates according to the invention, preferably at least 20%. Likewise, it is preferred that the amount of H2U (triglyceride of 2 saturated fatty acids of 16 or more
20 carbon atoms and 1 cis-unsaturated fatty acid) taken together is at least 40% wt based on the total amount triglycerides in the particulates according to the invention. Apart from said amounts of H3 and H2U it can be preferred to use fats in such particulates in a particular ratio. In this case, the ratio H3 / H2U is preferably between 0.5 and 1.2. Regarding the basic fatty acid composition, it is preferred that the amount of H (i.e. saturated fatty acids of 16 or more
25 carbon atoms, e.g. C16-C24) is between 60 and 75% wt based on total amount of triglycerides in the particulates according to the invention. Normally, only fatty acids are used with even number of carbon atoms. Similarly, it is preferred that the amount of U (cis-unsaturated fatty acids of any suitable chain length) is between 20 and 45% wt based on total amount of triglycerides in the particulates according to the invention. In the particulates according to the
30 invention the amount of palmitic fatty acid (C16:0) in the triglycerides is preferably between 30 and 70%, more preferably between 40 and 60% wt based on the total amount of triglycerides in the particulates according to the invention.

EXAMPLES**Example 1: creamer manufacture**

Four different creamers were prepared, each with a different fatty matter composition. Apart from the fatty matter composition the creamers had the same composition.

Fatty matter components	I	II	III	IV
Phyto sterol ester	100 %	25 %	50 %	75 %
Fat blend A		75 %	50 %	25 %

- 5 The phyto sterol ester used was bean oil sterol interesterified with esters derived from sunflower oil.

Fat blend A used was a blend of 40% PO (palm oil) and 60% POs (dry fractionated palm stearin with a melting point of approx. 53°C.

- 10 The fatty fractions were prepared by mixing the required amounts of phyto sterol ester and fat blend A and heating up 75°C in a blending vessel under nitrogen atmosphere for 10 min.

The following ingredients were used to prepare a particulate creamer, using the four different fat blends above:

5 kg water

- 15 1.5 kg fatty matter of table above

0.02 kg sodium caseinate

0.18 kg calcium caseinate

0.23 kg lactose

0.07 kg phosphate.

- 20 The processing involved the following process: all ingredients were mixed in a mixing tank with an Ultraturrax for 5 min. at 55°C and then homogenized in a homogenizer (Schroeder) at one stage, 200 bar. The resulting suspension then was spray dried in a multi stage spray dryer (Niro). The inlet temperature was about 165°C; the outlet temperature about 62°C. The dry particulate creamer was agglomerated for 5 minutes in an agglomeration process step
- 25 (Glatt Agglomerator, inlet temperature 80°C, outlet temperature 50°C). The spray dried and agglomerated creamer was stored under cool conditions below 20°C.

Example 2: Saffron cream soup

A dry soup mix for a saffron cream soup was made by mixing:

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 30 Creamer containing fatty matter III | 32.94% |
| Heat/moisture-treated starch, dried | 15.73% |
| Skim milk powder | 21.32% |

	Xanthan	1.12%
	Common salt	4.51%
	Citric acid granular	0.22%
	Powdered onion and leek	5.55%
5	Sugar	2.50%
	Saffron powder	0.08%
	Various flavourings	16.03%

10 To prepare the creamy saffron soup 40g of this dry mixture was stirred into 200ml cold water, mixed and briefly brought to the boil. A creamy saffron soup with good mouthfeel was the result.

Example 3: Cream-style sauce

A dry sauce mixture for a cream-style sauce was made by mixing:

	Creamer containing fatty matter III	26.00%
15	Waxy corn starch, dried	25.91%
	Lactose	7.97%
	Common salt	8.09%
	Roux white	14.39%
	Champignon extract powder	2.77%
20	Powdered onion	5.18%
	Sugar	1.43%
	Various flavourings	8.26%

25 To prepare the creamy sauce 40g of this dry mixture was stirred into 200ml cold water, mixed and briefly brought to the boil. A creamy sauce with good mouthfeel was the result.

Example 4: Mushroom cream soup

A dry soup mix for a mushroom cream soup can be made by mixing:

	Creamer containing fatty matter III	28.40%
	Heat/moisture-treated starch, dried	14.76%
30	Skim milk powder	22.14%
	Xanthan	1.05%
	Common salt	4.22%
	Citric acid granular	0.40%
	Powdered onion and leek	5.18%
35	Sugar	1.10%

Powdered mushrooms and ceps	14.49%
Various flavourings	8.26%

To prepare the creamy mushroom soup 40g of this dry mixture can be stirred into 200ml cold water, mixed and briefly boiled.

5

Example 5: Tomato cream sauce

A dry sauce mixture for a creamy tomato sauce can be made by mixing:

	Creamer containing fatty matter III	28.40%
	Heat/moisture-treated starch, dried	14.76%
10	Tomato powder	36.63%
	Xanthan	1.05%
	Common salt	4.22%
	Citric acid granular	0.40%
	Powdered onion and leek	5.18%
15	Sugar	1.10%
	Various flavourings	8.26%

To prepare the creamy tomato sauce 40g of this dry mixture can be stirred into 200ml cold water, mixed and briefly boiled.

Example 6: leek cream-style sauce

A dry sauce mixture for a leek cream-style sauce was made by mixing:

	Creamer containing fatty matter III	28.40%
	Heat/moisture-treated starch, dried	14.76%
	Leek powder	36.63%
25	Xanthan	1.05%
	Common salt	4.22%
	Citric acid granular	0.40%
	Powdered onion and leek	5.18%
	Sugar	1.10%
30	Various flavourings	8.26%

To prepare the creamy tomato sauce 40g of this dry mixture can be stirred into 200ml cold water, mixed and briefly boiled.

CLAIMS

(83)

1. Particulates comprising 10-95% wt (preferably 20-90%) of a matrix material and 5-90% wt (preferably 10-80% wt) of fatty matter, wherein said fatty matter comprises 5-100% of one or more of phytosterols.
2. Particulates according to claim 1, wherein the sterols comprise esters of the sterols.
3. Particulates according to claim 2, wherein the esters of the sterols comprise fatty acid esters.
4. Particulates according to claim 1-3, wherein the fatty matter is dispersed in the matrix material, preferably as discrete regions.
5. Particulates according to claim 1-4, wherein the fatty matter is dispersed in the matrix material as oily or fatty matter droplets, crystals or particles.
6. Particulates according to claim 1-5, wherein said fatty matter is present as oily or fatty matter droplets or crystals which droplets or crystals are at least partly covered by or encapsulated with the matrix material.
7. Particulates according to claim 1-6, wherein the matrix material comprises a protein and/or a carbohydrate.
8. Particulates according to claim 7, wherein the protein comprises a dairy protein, hydrolysed protein, gelatin, soy protein, or mixtures thereof.
9. Particulates according to claim 7, wherein the carbohydrate comprises maltodextrin, sugar, sugar derivative, starch, flour, chemically modified starch, physically modified starch, xanthan, guar, locust bean gum, alginate, pectin, carrageenan, polydextrose, or mixtures thereof.
10. Particulates according to claim 1-9, wherein the matrix material comprises dairy products like liquid and/or powdered (skim) milk or cream.

11. Particulates according to claim 1-10, wherein at least 60% by weight of the particulates has a size of 1-1000 μm , preferably 10-600 μm .
12. Particulates according to claim 1-11, wherein at least 60% by weight of the oily or fatty matter droplets, crystals or particles has a size of 0.05-100 μm , preferably 0.1-20 μm .
13. Particulates according to claim 1-12, containing less than 30% wt (preferably less than 20% wt) of water.
14. Particulates according to claim 1-13, wherein the particulates are in the shape of flakes, granules, powder, cube, pellet, or tablet.
15. Creamer or whitener comprising 10-100% of the particulates according to claim 1-14.
16. Composition comprising 2-50% wt salt, 0-30% wt MSG, 0-50% fat and/or fatty matter, 0-20% wt herbs and/or spices, 0-30% wt vegetable particulates, 0-30% wt starch-based thickener and further comprising 0.1-65% wt (preferably 2-50% wt) of the particulates according to claim 1-14.
17. Composition according to claim 16 in the form of flakes, granules, powder or agglomerated or pressed to a cube, pellet, or tablet.
18. Composition according to claim 16-17, which is a soup- or sauce concentrate.
19. Process for manufacturing the particulates according to claim 1-15, comprising the steps of:
 - preparing an emulsion or dispersion of the fatty matter and matrix material in an aqueous liquid
 - drying said emulsion or dispersion.
20. Process according to claim 19, further comprising a homogenising step prior to the drying of the emulsion or dispersion.
21. Process according to claim 19-20, wherein the drying is carried out by spray-drying.

22. Process for preparing a liquid or pasty sauce, soup or concentrate of such a sauce or soup, which process includes the step of including 0.1-65% wt (preferably 2-50% wt) of the particulates according to claim 1-15 in such liquid or pasty sauce, soup or concentrate of such a sauce or soup.

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ABSTRACT

5 Particulate compositions comprising 10-95% wt of a matrix material and 5-90% wt of fatty matter, wherein said fatty matter comprises 5-100% of phytosterols (and wherein the compositions are preferably low in triglycerides of transunsaturated fatty acids), for use as for example a creamer and/or whitener. The invention also relates to a process for preparing such particulates and food products containing such creamer.

